

KENT VOICE

Protecting Kent's Countryside
AUTUMN/WINTER 2015

**Last chance
to save iconic
landscape**

www.cprekent.org.uk





NFU MUTUAL BESPOKE
HOME INSURANCE

TAILORED COVER WITH A REAL FOCUS ON THE FINER DETAILS

Take a closer look at NFU Mutual Bespoke – tailored home insurance rated 5 Star by independent financial research company Defaqto. Designed for those with higher value homes and contents worth over £100,000 including fine art and collections, our expert team work closely with you to tailor cover that meets your specific requirements.

To find out more, please contact our branch in Ashford on 01233 500822.



NFU Mutual
INSURANCE | PENSIONS | INVESTMENTS

It's about time®

Agent of The National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society.

For security and training purposes, telephone calls may be recorded and monitored.

Director's Introduction

Hilary Newport



With so much bleak news about the threats facing Kent's countryside, it often seems as though there isn't much to celebrate. The county has been groaning under the pressures of operation stack, and the relentless onslaught of speculative applications for inappropriate developments that have never been through a proper plan-led assessment seems never to stop.

So it was a welcome breath of fresh air to pause and take a chance to celebrate what the third sector and voluntary work can achieve. At the end of May I was lucky enough to attend a royal garden party as the guest of Susan Pittman, the hard-working secretary of CPRE Kent's Sevenoaks Committee, who won the draw for tickets held every year within CPRE (whose patron is, of course, Her Majesty the Queen). The party at Buckingham Palace was a delight, the catering was meticulous, but mostly what I will remember is the sight of a collected 8,000 people, all dedicated one way or another to public service, and the opportunity to remind myself that the third sector, through the power of people who care, really does make a difference.

Hilary Newport & Susan Pittman ready to meet the Queen



Contents

- Page 4-5 The livestock which enhance our countryside in more ways than one
- Page 6-7 Magna Carta: Golden Threads of our Liberties
- Page 8 Representing Kent - our new MPs
- Page 8 Planning the future
- Page 9 Chairman's Update
- Page 10-11 Waterside Park - watch this space
- Page 12-13 Headlines from the campaigns frontline
- Page 14-15 Final chance to save the iconic landscape at Farthingloe
- Page 16-17 Good news for Romney Marsh
- Page 18-19 Our Green Belt
- Page 20-23 Local Plan round-up
- Page 24 Social scene
- Page 25 Fancy a tippie?
- Page 26-29 Around the districts
- Page 30-31 News round-up
- Page 32 Wild flower bonanza



Exmoor pony, Langiewicz



Horseshoe Vetch, WCCP



Fungus, Colin Jones



Tel: 01233 714540 info@cprekent.org.uk



www.cprekent.org.uk



headleybrothers LIMITED
TOTAL PRINT SOLUTIONS



MIX
Paper from
responsible sources
FSC® C011836

Photo credits: Thank you to our supporters who have taken the photos used in this issue.

Cover picture by Suvodeb Banerjee, Kent Photo Library



THE LIVESTOCK WHICH ENHANCE OUR COUNTRYSIDE IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

Highland cattle at Folkestone Warren, WCCP

If you wandered over some of our most beautiful countryside this summer you may have spotted some unexpected, rare and handsome livestock – Highland and Dexter cattle, Konik horses and Exmoor ponies. They have been introduced to play a vital conservation role, as Susannah Richter discovered.

One hundred years ago cattle were a common site on the Folkestone Warren but in 1926 they were removed. Since then, and after myxomatosis killed off so many rabbits in the early 1960s, part of the area has been taken over by thick scrub and secondary woodland. Considered one of the most important nature reserves in Britain, it is vital to protect and conserve this habitat and that is why livestock is being re-introduced – to graze and manage the land.

Five young Highland cattle were put out to graze in early summer – they are an excellent breed for pushing back scrub and are very docile. They are among a large number of cattle and ponies now being used to manage the Kent countryside.

Plants and butterflies thrive

Grazing chalk downland allows a wonderful variety of flora and fauna to thrive because it prevents the dominance of any one plant species. Without grazing, the thicker, coarser grasses will smother

the rare orchids and other plants characteristic of this habitat.

Cattle and ponies break up the thatch of grassy leaf litter revealing bare soil beneath and this is what is so important - for example, the Adonis Blue butterfly will only lay her eggs on horse-shoe vetch, the only plant her caterpillars will eat. Grazing animals also eat tree and shrub seedlings preventing the conversion of grassland to woodland.

Rare breeds

The White Cliffs Countryside Project (WCCP) manages 556 hectares of land in Dover and Shepway, 232 hectares of which are now being grazed:

- Four Konik horses, a rare species bred back from the wild European forest horse hunted to extinction in Britain in Neolithic times, graze land at High Meadow, Dover;
- 16 Dexter cattle graze Dover's Western Heights, Whinless Down and South Foreland Valley;



- 24 Highland cattle graze Folkestone Downs and Folkestone Warren;
- From this autumn sheep and cattle will graze Samphire Hoe and sheep will graze Romney Warren Country Park.

People can still walk and enjoy the countryside alongside these beautiful animals, but are asked to keep dogs under control and take rubbish home with them.

Kirk Alexander, partnership manager for WCCP, said: "It is vital to manage this important wildlife environment to protect the rare species which flourish on chalk downland. Grazing is the most effective way of keeping the thick coarse grass down and pushing back the scrub which can invade the downland and shade out rare orchids and insects."

The perfect tool for the job

Also in Kent, at the White Cliffs, the National Trust introduced Exmoor ponies 20 years ago to help look after this special place without the need for intensive human intervention. The Exmoor pony is an ideal breed for conservation -

hardy, intelligent and resourceful. They not only graze grass but also browse hawthorn berries, young trees and thistle buds. They'll even strip off bark. The ponies are managed as an extensive, semi-wild herd with regular checks and an annual health assessment by a vet.

Return of wildlife

Over the last 20 years the various livestock have had an extremely positive effect on Kent's biodiversity. Along with the cattle, ponies and sheep, other visitors are returning to the downland as a result of grazing management.



Oxtongue Broomrape, WCCP



Late Spider Orchid, WCCP



Konik horses, Whinless Down Dover, Paul Sampson



Dexter cattle, Western Heights Dover, Paul Sampson

The number of late spider orchids on the Folkestone Downs has increased from just six in 1990 to more than 200, and hundreds of common spotted orchids are starting to bloom. At the Warren swathes of primroses can be seen in the spring in the woodland edge and recently cleared scrub, and one of the UK's rarest plants, oxtongue broomrape, is growing on the White Cliffs. With a little help from these animals it is hoped more and more beautiful and rare species will flourish and survive in the future.



Magna Carta: Golden Threads of our Liberties

Miniature of King John hunting © British Library



by Sir Robert Worcester

Magna Carta, agreed by Baaaad King John, the 'Great Charter', was the end of 'divine rule' of kings, it is the foundation of our liberty, of the rule of law, and then, the beginning of what we now call human rights. No wonder there's such a fuss about it these days, especially in its 800th anniversary year.

That's the heritage, but what about its legacy? It's just a document, written on one page of parchment containing about 3,500 words and having 63 clauses, but it packs a hefty punch, even today.

There are a few academic pedants who claim only three, maybe four, clauses are still in the statute books. Others say it was just a peace treaty that failed. And others say it was just the establishment, the Kings and Barons having a fight

over taxes. And that it didn't contain anything for the people of the land or women's rights, and even that it was 'signed', when it wasn't, it was sealed.

So what is Magna Carta, anyway?

There are two 'golden threads' that run through the 800 years since King John (we know him as 'Baaaad King John') met the rebel barons and bishops at Runnymede, on the Thames (under the Heathrow flight path today).

Over the past 800 years, the 'golden threads' are what developed as the Rule of Law and Human Rights.

The Rule of Law, the glue that sticks society together, that promises a fair trial, not just for barons, but Article 40 is short and to the point: "To no

one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.” Article 38 is a good one too: “No official shall place a man on trial upon his own unsupported statement, without producing credible witnesses to the truth on it.”

But what about the ladies? Article 8: “No widow shall be compelled to marry, so long she wishes to remain without a husband.” And children? “The guardian of the land of an heir who is under age shall take from it only reasonable revenues, customary dues and feudal service. He shall do this without destruction or damage to men or property.”

What about the rest of us? There’s Article 35: “There shall be standard measures of wine, ale ... throughout the kingdom.” They say the pint was invented on Magna Carta Day – 15 June 1215.

“There shall be standard measures of wine, ale ... throughout the kingdom.”

So where do we find more about the heritage, the time line, and the future expectations of what the Magna Carta has meant to people, what does it now mean to people, and what might it mean to people in the future? See the 800th Committee website:

www.magnacarta800th.com

CPRE knows the value of free speech, protest, right of assembly, challenge of authority - all in the

protection of rural England. But do our members recognise that in many countries today the rights we enjoy are derived from the Magna Carta? And if they do, do our children, and will our children’s children? As new citizens, some of you parents who will be asked why you are becoming British, you can share together the timeline of the Magna Carta’s two ‘golden threads’. If you have children, grandchildren or nephews and nieces who don’t know, tell them now where these liberties come from and that it is up to them to carry it on when we grow old. Our ancestors fought for our rights; we need now to protest against their erosion.



First known portrait of King John by an unknown artist, 1620 © National Portrait Gallery



First ever printed copy of Magna Carta 1506 © British Library

Without the principles developed out of Magna Carta, there could be as of old, despots and dictators, potentates and pirates who rule over us with a Rule of Force in the future, not of laws based on their power, not democratic societies as affect nearly two billion people in over 100 countries throughout the world today. It’s your world, your country and your county now, and the future is yours, and indeed theirs.

A major exhibition on the Magna Carta and its historical associations to Kent, with the 1300 Faversham Magna Carta as its centrepiece, is on display at Lady Chapel, Rochester Cathedral until 6th December.



Miniature of the Poisoning of King John © British Library

Representing Kent - our new MPs



Craig Mackinlay
South Thanet



Kelly Tolhurst
Rochester and Strood



Tom Tugendhat
Tonbridge and Malling



Helen Whately
Faversham and Mid Kent

We welcomed four new MPs to Kent this year and are hoping they will support us in protecting the countryside.

Helen Whately MP said:

"With so much pressure to build homes, some larger villages are earmarked for substantial developments. Others, particularly the

smallest villages, have told me they would like more freedom to develop. For instance, a handful of new houses would help keep the village pub and shop going. The answer has to be about getting the balance right, to avoid swamping villages with large 'add-on' developments without adequate infrastructure, and to make sure that while building badly-needed homes we look after the countryside and heritage that makes this area so special."

Tom Tugendhat MP said:

"My priorities for the countryside are simple; promoting the diversity of interests which ensures we are a thriving, vibrant community to live and work. That is as much about supporting all rural businesses as protecting the beauty of the countryside. Kent is a wonderful place - let's work together to protect it."

Planning *the future*

CPRE Kent Senior Planner Brian Lloyd is soon to move on to pastures new after eight years with the charity. Two new professional planners have joined CPRE Kent and here they introduce themselves:

Jillian Barr:

I have worked as a local government planner since 1999.

My qualifications in Conservation Management & Environmental Law led me to specialise in rural and environment related elements of planning, including sustainable construction, sustainability appraisal, habitat conservation, renewable energy and landscape assessment. I have worked in neighbourhood planning and appreciate the important influence communities should have.

I am looking forward to working within CPRE Kent to help ensure that sustainable development and genuine spatial planning is at the forefront in influencing successful and usable developments. Communities need to engage with the planning system to ensure a sustainable future. It is development at the right pace and in the right place that will generate shared growth, protect our countryside, create successful communities and prepare us for a changing climate.



Paul Buckley:

I have worked for Kent local authority planning departments for 37 years; for 10 years with Kent County Council in the Minerals Development Control Team and then the Research Group analysing and interpreting employment data. I went on to spend 27 years in Dartford Borough Council's Planning Policy Team helping prepare Local Plans and the Core Strategy; representing the council on projects such as the South East Plan and the North Kent Regional Park; and was involved with work on Kent Thameside from its early days.

Married with two grown up sons, I have lived in Kent for over 50 years. I attend St Mary Greenhithe, am Secretary for Churches Together in Ebbsfleet, and a Trustee for Kent Workplace Mission. I enjoy gardening, photography and help to lead Health Walks in Greenhithe.





Chairman's Update

Christine Drury

As summer draws to a damp and windy close, the glorious Kent countryside gathers in another harvest and country walks and cycle rides become wrap up warm events. This should be good reason to celebrate the richness of landscapes and rural character that is Kent. And at one level of course it is: Kent remains a wonderful part of England, but we do have to work harder and harder to keep it that way. CPRE Kent's strap line is "to protect Kent from inappropriate development". There is no doubt we need more homes in Kent, but more need to be affordable and they must not destroy our countryside by being built on greenfield sites while brownfield sites sit idle.

CPRE's national campaigns to get "brownfield first" back on the planning policy agenda have had some success. Local councils now have to accelerate getting brownfield

sites cleared in planning terms, although not all think this will help deliver development. We support anything that increases the priority for brownfield and helps to preserve the green fields that are the landscape, the harvest and the rural character of Kent.

CPRE's Charter campaign – brownfield first, a fair say for communities and more housing in the right places - ended on a high note in June with over 80,000 signatures. Thank you to everyone in Kent who signed: it was a privilege to represent you all when CPRE delivered the petition to No 10.

A fair say for communities is proving tough going. It should be what localism is about. The government is promoting neighbourhood planning, but the strategic framework of planning at local authority level remains very difficult, and is



Mill View © Jeremy Sage

non-existent at larger than local levels. This makes rational planning of infrastructure such as transport, schools, and health facilities virtually impossible. As you will see from our campaign reports in this issue, we battle on working with like-minded parishes and community groups and often alongside local planning authorities when developers appeal planning refusals. The recent appeal decision at Waterside Park was a welcome success, but we are braced for appeals and occasionally judicial review to be an increasing necessity to protect Kent from inappropriate development.

Your continued support is hugely appreciated - we need it more than ever.

Christine Drury, Chairman:

Tel 01233-627087

christine.drury@btopenworld .com

Or, contact the office in Charing:

Tel 01233 714540

info@cprekent.org.uk



Left to right - Sophie Spencer, Director CPRE Avonside; Shaun Spiers, Chief Executive National CPRE; Tony Nunes, CPRE London; Dee Haas, Chair CPRE Hampshire; Christine Drury, Chair CPRE Kent; Jackie Copley, Director CPRE Lancashire. Photo - Stafano Cagnoni

focus on Waterside Park

watch this space

Hilary Newport reports on our success at the Waterside Park planning inquiry but cautions that the site is still under threat.

Back in 2009, many of you will remember that CPRE Kent participated in the appeal into AXA's proposals to build a huge road-rail interchange at the foot of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) near Bearsted in Maidstone Borough.

Alongside committed and well-co-ordinated local campaigners, the borough and county councils, we made our case strongly in opposition during a three-month hearing. It took a further eight months to receive the inspector's report, and we were hugely relieved that he overwhelmingly rejected development at this site. His reasoning was that, although the site lay outside the boundary of the AONB, the damage to the setting of the AONB and the detriment to access to and through the countryside was unacceptable.

United in opposition

So back in May we deployed many of the same arguments when another challenge arose on a neighbouring site, the Waterside Park proposals for warehousing and office space put forward by Gallagher Group. The developers appealed Maidstone Borough Council's decisions to reject two very similar applications for the site. We joined Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council and the Joint Parishes Group in opposition. Once again we rallied an impressive array of witnesses who spoke eloquently and passionately about the potential impacts on local landscapes and Leeds Castle, on flora and fauna, and on planning matters ranging from water pollution to congestion to the due processes to be observed in the proper scrutiny and development of Maidstone's Local Plan. We recognise that Maidstone Borough Council has an obligation to support the creation and retention of jobs in the area, but this should not be at the expense of valued countryside when so many other options are available.

Leeds Castle Aerial Shot, photo Leeds Castle Foundation





AONB North from site - Stephen Sutherland

Sigh of relief

Fortunately, another collective sigh of relief was heard across Hollingbourne and Bearsted in July, when we heard that once again an appeal had failed. Inspector Katie Peerless said in her report: “Considerable environmental harm would result from the loss of this area of countryside to development on the landscape setting of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the heritage assets.”

This was exactly the verdict we had hoped for; a clear-cut recognition that development at this site would cause unacceptable damage to the setting of the AONB and to Leeds Castle. It would be nice to think that we could now turn our attention elsewhere, to challenges facing other parts of Kent, but we believe the developers are considering a legal challenge to the inspector’s decision. And we are starting to hear of plans for yet another, albeit smaller, warehouse and commercial proposal for this area. It seems that we may not yet be ready to wave goodbye to threats to this site.



Fishing ponds from site - Stephen Sutherland



Leeds Castle Gardens, photo Leeds Castle Foundation



Inquiry Protest - Hilary Newport



Ancient Woodland - Stephen Sutherland

headlines

from the campaigns frontline

We have had a busy summer on the campaigns front - here, Director Hilary Newport updates members on the latest hot topics in the county.



Lower Thames Crossing

An announcement is expected soon about the Government's preferred location for additional road capacity. Highways England has been given the task of choosing between Dartford or a site east of Gravesham; regrettably, it has not been tasked to pronounce on whether additional capacity is really needed. The misery of this summer's experiences with Operation Stack suggest a road-building programme that supports the growth of road-based traffic through Kent is perhaps not the cleverest of ideas.



Eastern Quarry - Max Nathan

Waterside Park

After spending most of July in the public inquiry we were delighted to hear that the inspector rejected the appeal, on the grounds that speculative warehousing development in the setting of the Kent Downs AONB and Leeds Castle would be unacceptably damaging. We won! (See page 10).



Operation Stack - Hilary Newport

The Ebbsfleet Urban Development Corporation

The corporation is now consulting widely on the options for its Garden City. It's the first commercial development in the country that will be determined by the Infrastructure and Planning Commission as an 'NSIP' (a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project) so we will be maintaining close involvement.



Pylons - Vicky Ellis

Pylons

We were disappointed to learn that after much local consultation, National Grid have resolved to go ahead with a route that will mainly run overground on 50m high pylons. The preferred route will run from Richborough past Sarre, Upstreet and Hersden before turning south to join the grid connection at Canterbury. We retain our concerns over visual intrusion and the impacts on ancient woodland.

Aviation

On June 30th the Airports Commission announced that its preferred option for runway expansion was a third runway at Heathrow. However speculation still rages over possible expansion at Gatwick. Supporters are still vociferous in their insistence on building another runway there, while opponents of expansion at Heathrow point to the illegally high levels of air pollution which already exist in the area. The Commission recommended the Heathrow option on the understanding that strict conditions regarding noise pollution, air quality and night flights were imposed, but Heathrow bosses are already attempting to negotiate away some of these conditions. The government's response to the Commission's recommendation is expected before the end of the year.

On a positive note, we congratulate the campaigners who succeeded in persuading easyJet to bring forward their programme to retrofit noise-reducing measures to the particularly noisy Airbus A320s, which make up a large part of their fleet, and are responsible for a disproportionate amount of noise nuisance around Gatwick. This is proof, if it were needed, that more can be done to manage noise nuisance, if only the will is there.

Meanwhile, Manston Airport remains closed and as we write is in the process of being prepared to act as a buffer lorry park for Operation Stack.



Planes over Vauxhall in 1 hour - Heathrow Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise



Farthingloe - Brian Lloyd

Western Heights and Farthingloe

Dover District Council finally granted planning permission for over 600 homes in the AONB in April; we had just 6 weeks to lodge a legal challenge and we are now awaiting a legal decision on whether our grounds to take the case to judicial review are strong enough for the case to proceed to court (see page 14).

Local plans, local people

As the slow progress of creating and updating local plans rolls on in many of Kent's districts, we are still seeing staggeringly high housing targets being set – far higher, in many cases, than in the unlamented South East Plan – and the impossible challenges of meeting the natural and built infrastructure needs of these houses. At the moment, draft or approved housebuilding targets in local plans across the county total nearly 9,000 homes per annum.



Renewable energy

Outline proposals for an on-shore windfarm between St Nicholas-at-Wade and Sarre on the Thanet/Canterbury border are being consulted on locally. Details are still to be confirmed, but these turbines could be as much as 125m high and would be an extraordinary intrusion into a sweeping and iconic landscape, rich in history.

Final chance to save iconic landscape

We are doing all we can to prevent the destruction of a beautiful area of the Kent Downs at Farthingloe.

We were incredulous that permission was granted for over 600 homes in this protected Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and have fought it all the way – now our last ditch attempt to stop it is a Judicial Review. It has been a long and complicated process, as Hilary Newport explains.

To recap, this proposal to build housing in the AONB at Farthingloe is being justified by an agreement that the development will generate funds – a proposed donation of £5m – towards the costs of the stabilisation and partial restoration of the fortifications at the Western Heights. The restoration of these remarkable defences which date back to the Napoleonic Wars is something that we wholeheartedly support, but we contend that the financial contribution could be raised by housebuilding anywhere in the district of Dover, and there is no justification to cause such significant harm to a designated ANOB. The

designation of AONB requires that any development should only be carried out if it can be demonstrated that it is in the national interest and that there are no alternative sites on which to build – which is clearly not the case in Dover. Not only does Dover district have many other sites ready to build on, but in preparing its Local Plan, Dover District Council had already rejected this site as being in an unsustainable location, poorly connected to Dover and outside the town's settlement boundaries.

This decision is a sterling example of the importance of making the case

for establishing a third-party right of appeal for planning decisions. Currently, a developer may appeal against refusal of planning permission, but there is no right of appeal against the grant of planning permission – no matter how strong the case might be.

The inherent rights and wrongs of the planning decision cannot be challenged; the only possible point of challenge is whether the regulations and conventions about how the decision was arrived at were properly followed. In this case, we believe they were not: we have made our written representations to the planning court, and the case will be heard in December.

We are confident that we have strong grounds to challenge this decision, but it will be a lengthy and potentially expensive process. Nevertheless, we believe that both Dover District Council, in resolving to grant this planning permission, and the Department for Communities and Local Government, in declining to 'call in' the decision for independent



Western Heights view over Western Docks, Vicky Ellis



Farthingloe from Mount Road, Vicky Ellis



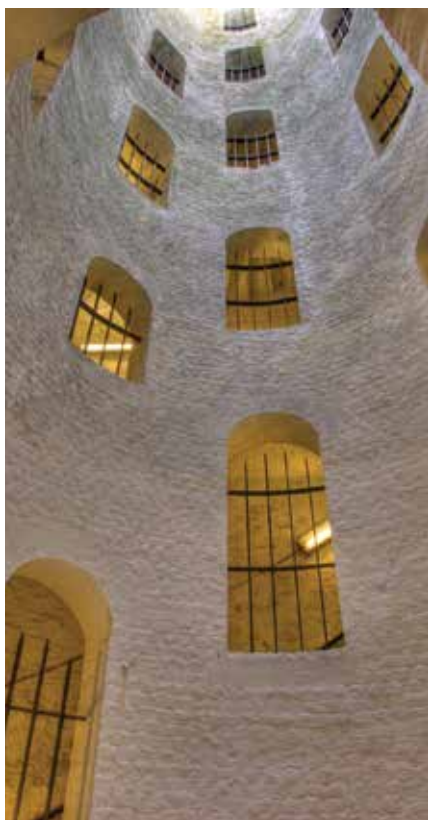


View across valley towards site 'B' and Western Heights, Brian Lloyd

scrutiny, have failed in their duty to uphold the protections that should be afforded to this site. We know that the (then) Secretary of State, Eric Pickles, was lobbied by the local MP and the leader of Dover District Council who both highlighted the economic benefits of supporting this development, rather than the importance of the protected landscape. We have reached the

end of the line for protecting this site: if we don't take this last stance and challenge this decision, who else will take on the fight to protect the AONB, if not CPRE?

“If we don't take this last stance and challenge this decision, who else will take on the fight to protect the AONB, if not CPRE?”



Western Heights Grand Shaft, photo Glen, flickr

The case has attracted national and international media interest: BBC Radio 4's File on 4 and BBC2's The Producers, as well as the Daily Mirror and – surreally – China Central TV, aghast at the potential for damage to the setting of the internationally iconic White Cliffs of Dover. In November 2013 they shipped over a film crew and a translator to feature the story on their national news programmes.



Western Heights, photo Glen, flickr

It seems the viewing public in China has more regard for our heritage and landscapes than Dover's elected representatives or our Secretary of State.

A Judicial Review can cost in excess of £20,000. If you would like to contribute towards this fight to protect the AONB please contact us or make a donation via our website. We are only able to work to protect Kent's countryside with the help of our members and supporters.

Good News

for Romney Marsh

CPRE Kent has long campaigned for improved flood protection on the Romney Marsh - an area of grade I agricultural land. Now, as Susannah Richter found out, there is some good news as work to replace the 70 year old pumps at Appledore nears completion.

Reclaimed from the sea in Roman times, the Romney Marsh is now an iconic landscape of 100 sq miles of prime farmland, dotted with historic churches and dominated by the power stations at Dungeness. The original flood defence wall was built by the Romans 2,500 years ago, but now the responsibility for flood prevention lies with the Environment Agency (EA), the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and farmers and landowners.

“One day nature will reclaim the marsh and it will go back to the sea,” said Paul Marshall, Operations Team Leader with the Environment Agency. “It could be in a thousand years time, it could be 10,000, we don’t know. But in the meantime we must make sure our flood defences are robust, functional and maintained to protect life, property and the land.”

The EA manages the main rivers and water courses across the marsh, the IDB looks after the smaller drains, dykes and streams and farmers and landowners must ensure adequate drainage on their

own land. There is massive flood defence infrastructure, including some 50 pumps built between 1940 and 1960.

The current £300,000+ project to replace the pumps at Appledore will protect 150 properties across 60 square miles of Kent countryside. The original diesel pumps were installed in the mid 1940s to pump water from the Engine Sewer into the Royal Military Canal. They required 24/7 maintenance and supervision - a lonely job out at the pumping station.

“One day nature will reclaim the marsh and it will go back to the sea”

Fish and eel friendly

The new pumps use modern technology and will be environmentally efficient as well as fish and eel friendly. They are able to pump 609 litres of water a second, that’s more than two million litres an hour!

Phase 1 of the project saw the removal of the old diesel pumps as well as the upgrade of the electricity supply in readiness for the new pumps.

Royal Military Canal, Susannah Richter



Royal Military canal, Richard Watkins, LRPS, flickr

On display

A fascinating example of engineering, the old Hornsby diesel engine pumps are heading off to the Brede Steam Giants Museum where visitors will be able to watch one in working action and a cross section of the other to see exactly how they performed to protect the marsh for the last 70 years.

The museum, run by volunteers, has 40 exhibits of water related pumps and engines dating from 1889. It is free to visit on the first Saturday of every month and Bank Holiday Mondays.

“We carried out a soft demolition, bolt by bolt, to preserve these old pumps for engineering enthusiasts and historians to see in the future,” said Mr Marshall.

Campaigning pays off

CPRE Kent has long campaigned for this sort of investment in flood defences. CPRE member and campaigner Charles Wilkinson said: “We are delighted that this scheme has not only led to state of the art new pumps to protect the community and important farmland in this area, but also the added bonus of an unusual and fascinating

addition to the nearby museum.”

Mr Marshall said they had listened to CPRE Kent and local people and also learned valuable lessons from the 2013/14 floods, which particularly hit the Stour catchment area, before planning the maintenance and upgrade.

“You can’t stop all flooding - the biggest threat is a major storm out at sea and a spring tide surge which, with the wind in the right direction, could cause major problems,” he said. “But we can manage a lot of the heavy rainfall and groundwater flooding with our system of pumps and drains.”

The new electric pumps should last at least another 50 years helping to protect this important and iconic part of Kent.



Left - Brede Steam Giants Museum, Brede Steam Engine Society

Below - Paul Marshall, Environment Agency





The Green Belt: it's where we relax, where we watch wildlife, where we cycle and walk and picnic. The wonderful views and the tranquillity of open countryside is so important to our health and well-being. That is why CPRE has launched a campaign to protect it in its sixtieth anniversary year.

Our Green Belt

Secretary of the Sevenoaks District Committee Susan Pittman, pictured above in 1950, shares her own personal memories of the Green Belt:

In the 1930s London was spreading its tentacles towards the north-west Kent countryside along the main arterial routes of the A2 and A20. The sprawl seemed relentless, and in the mid-1930s the Darent Valley came under threat. Burdened by double death duties the Hart Dyke family had been forced to sell most of its estate, including Lullingstone Park, and the speculative purchaser (Kemp Town Brewery Brighton Ltd) made no secret that it regarded the land as ripe for development. Coupled with the electrification of

the Swanley to Sevenoaks railway line, building on a large scale was planned, with Lullingstone Park becoming the centre of a high-class residential estate.

Among local residents championing the countryside was author Arthur Mee, well-known as compiler of 'The Children's Encyclopaedia'. In another of his publications 'The Children's Newspaper' he wrote on 20 February 1937 about the principal national asset of England being its beauty: "No British Government has ever cared much for saving the countryside". He went on to argue that people and societies who care for preserving what "is lovely and of good report" should carry on doing what the Government should be doing in their name. Pressure for a Green Belt to contain urbanisation led to the Green Belt Act of 1938 (the forerunner of formal government policy on Green Belts in 1955) which saved key areas around London, including Lullingstone Park. This was purchased by Kent County Council backed by London County Council, providing that the land was designated Green Belt. After the war, Green Belt protection crushed

The Green Belt is massively under attack from developers seeking to encroach on to the green buffer created sixty years ago to provide distinction between towns and villages – a vital green lung around the built up areas.

In Kent we have a large amount of Green Belt - 93% of Sevenoaks, 77% of Gravesham, 71% of Tonbridge and Malling, 56% of Dartford and 22% of Tunbridge Wells. If you love your Green Belt please get involved by sharing your photos, memories, creative works or just your support and thoughts via **#ourgreenbelt**.

We will use this to convince the Government that the Green Belt needs protection and must be preserved for our future and our children's future.





housing plans for the Darent Valley, which now enjoys the protection of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty status. It all could have been so horrifyingly different!

As a child of the 1950s, I benefited from the Green Belt because the Darent Valley became the focus of many family excursions into Kent from our suburban home in Blackheath. It was on the chalk hills I first encountered swaths of wild flowers with butterflies flitting overhead, explored mysterious woodlands filled with birdsong, and paddled in the cool waters of the River Darent with fishing net in hand. Armed with Arthur Mee's 'Kent', one of his King's England series started in 1936, my parents would take us deeper into Kent, stopping at each village to explore the local church or highlight which was described in its alphabetical description of villages. From that early age I became a champion of the countryside, never guessing that one day I would be living in that very area which bodies like CPRE had fought so hard to save.

Below: Lullingstone Park by Susan Pittman



Top left: Susan Pittman enjoying the countryside, c1950, & Darent Valley, photo by Susan Pittman

Top middle: Eynsford viaduct, photo by Glen Humble, flickr

Top right: Late July field of lavender, Castle Farm. Lullingstone, photo by Glen Humble, flickr

Middle right: River Darent at Shoreham, photo by Glen Humble

Bottom left: Lullingstone Park, photo by Susan Pittman



Local Plan *round-up*



CPRE Kent's Senior Planner, Brian Lloyd, reviews the latest situation with local plans in Kent and what has happened since the last issue of Kent Voice.

The major local plan event has been the public examination into the controversial **Canterbury District Local Plan**.

The plan, covering the period to 2031, was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in November 2014. The stage 1 hearings, to consider legal compliance, overall strategy and strategic development sites, were held over three weeks in July. The stage 2 hearings, to consider the smaller sites and development management policies, were scheduled for September.

Concerns raised at hearings

Throughout its preparation we raised major concerns which we argued in detail at the hearings. In particular we considered that the housing target of 15,600 new homes (780 a year) was too high. We considered that the strategy of the plan, which would see the bulk of this new housing built on a handful of large greenfield sites, many high quality agricultural land, was wrong and failed to maximise the use of brownfield land. It failed to address the housing needs of the rural communities. The sites proposed include 4,000 homes in south Canterbury, 1,000 at Sturry/Broad Oak, 3,000 at Herne Bay/Herne village and 500 at Hersden.

We raised concern about the costly new road infrastructure necessary - a new interchange on the A2 at Bridge, a Sturry Relief Road, a Herne Relief Road and an A28/A257 Link Road. The plan envisages that these major road schemes, which will cost in excess of £100m, will be primarily funded by the proposed developments. Because of the cost, and the complex inter-relationships between the sites and the new roads, we considered that the plan is undeliverable and will not ensure a sustained five-year supply of housing sites, as required by government planning policy. Furthermore, we are concerned that there will be no money left for affordable housing, open space, social and community facilities or for good quality design and landscaping.

We also questioned some of the technical work underpinning the plan, in particular the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). This should assess alternative development options to demonstrate that the chosen plan strategy is the best one. We argued that the SA failed to consider a full range of options, was not compliant with government regulations and the council had failed in its 'Duty to Cooperate' with neighbouring authorities.

Disappointing news

It was clear during the hearings that the inspector had concerns with the plan, which he outlined to the council in August. However, his letter contained disappointing news for CPRE Kent. In short, he dismissed all of our concerns about the SA and the Duty to Cooperate and disagreed that the council had failed in other legal requirements.

Furthermore, rather than agreeing that the housing target is too high, he believes it should in fact be increased to 16,000 new homes (800 per year) to reflect more recent housing need information. Although the inspector recognised concerns about delivery and the maintenance of a five year land supply of housing, his solution was simply to ask the council to consider identifying even more land for development.



More work needed

The inspector has instructed the council to do further work to address his concerns about housing and infrastructure delivery, including further consultation with 'appropriate parties', before the stage 2 hearings. Consequently, these hearings have been postponed. At the time of writing there is no indication when they will be held.

Swale and Tunbridge Wells plans to be examined

In April, following consultation over Christmas/New Year, Swale Borough Council submitted the Swale Borough Local Plan Part 1 for examination. The examination hearings are due to commence on 17th November. The appointed inspector has already raised concerns with the council about the justification for a housing target that is significantly below the objectively assessed housing need. For our part, we generally support the plan strategy and accept the proposed housing target of 10,800 new homes. We consider that the council's reasons for rejecting a higher target are robust and pragmatic, and will seek to support the council in this regard at the hearings. We will though, be seeking changes to meet the concerns we raised in our representations (see Local Plan round-up in the spring 2015 Kent Voice).

In June Tunbridge Wells Borough Council submitted its Site Allocations Development Plan Document for examination. The examination hearings are due to commence on 10th November and the CPRE Tunbridge Wells Committee will be fully involved on a number of the sites of concern to us. We have welcomed the fact though, that the plan does not see it necessary to review the Green Belt to accommodate the development targets set out in the adopted Core Strategy.



Graveney, photo by Vicky Ellis



Canterbury Cathedral aerial photo by John Fielding

Local Plan Overview

Our list gives the latest situation on local plans throughout Kent. In addition, each local authority has an old-style local plan which has 'saved' policies still relevant when considering planning applications. These will gradually be replaced as new plans are adopted. Details of currently 'saved' policies are provided on local authority websites.



Charing Church - Vicky Ellis



Dover Castle - Vicky Ellis

Ashford

- Core Strategy adopted July 2008
- Town Centre Plan adopted February 2010
- Tenterden and Rural Sites Plan adopted October 2010
- Urban Sites and Infrastructure Plan adopted October 2012
- Chilmington Green Area Action Plan adopted July 2013
- The council is reviewing the Core Strategy which will be presented as a new Local Plan covering the period to 2030. The pre-submission plan is expected to be published for consultation early in 2016.

Canterbury

- Herne Bay Area Action Plan adopted April 2010
- The Canterbury Local Plan was submitted for examination November 2014. Stage 1 hearings considering procedural matters, strategy and strategic sites were held in July 2015. Following these, the inspector wrote to the city council outlining concerns and highlighting further work that needs to be done. Consequently, the stage 2 hearings, considering other sites and the development management policies, have been postponed and the timing of these is yet to be announced.

Dartford

- Core Strategy adopted September 2011
- Consultation on a draft Site Allocations and Development Management Plan undertaken over the Christmas period 2014/15 and the pre-submission plan is expected to be published in early 2016.

Dover

- Core Strategy adopted February 2010
- The Land Allocations Plan adopted January 2015
- A Gypsy & Traveller Plan is in preparation, but the precise timing is currently unclear. A preferred options plan may be published for consultation before the end of the year.

Gravesham

- Core Strategy adopted September 2014.
- Work on a Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan is underway, involving a review of the Green Belt. It is anticipated that consultation on issues and options will take place before the end of the year.

Maidstone

- Affordable Housing Plan adopted December 2006
- Open Space Plan adopted December 2006
- A draft new Local Plan was published for consultation in March 2014. As a result of further work, the council intends to undertake further consultation on additional sites to be included in the plan in the autumn. It is expected that the pre-submission plan will be published early in 2016.

Sevenoaks

- Core Strategy adopted February 2011



- The Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan adopted February 2015
- A Gypsy & Traveller Plan is in preparation. Consultation on proposed sites was undertaken in May and November 2014. The next stage will be consultation on a pre-submission plan, though the timing of this remains unclear.

Shepway

- Core Strategy adopted September 2013
- Consultation on issues and options for the Allocations and Development Management Plan undertaken in January - March 2015. A Preferred Options Plan is expected to be published in March 2016.

Swale

- The new Swale Local Plan was submitted for examination in April 2015 and the examination is scheduled to open on 17th November.
- Consultation on issues and options for a Gypsy and Traveller Site Plan undertaken in February 2014, but it is unclear when further work on this plan will be progressed.

Thanet

- Cliftonville Plan adopted February 2010
- Consultation on strategy options for the Thanet Local Plan undertaken in the summer of 2013, and consultation on a draft Local Plan undertaken in January 2015. Consultation on the pre-submission plan is likely to be held early in 2016.

Tonbridge and Malling

- Core Strategy adopted September 2007
- Development Land Allocations Plan adopted April 2008
- Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan adopted April 2008
- Managing Development and the Environment Plan adopted April 2010
- The borough council has started a review of the adopted plans, and initial consultation on issues and options for a new Local Plan is expected next year.

Tunbridge Wells

- Core Strategy adopted June 2010
- Following pre-submission consultation in February 2015, the Site Allocations Plan was formally submitted in June. The examination is scheduled to open on 10th November.
- The council also proposes to prepare a Development Management Policies Plan and a Travellers Plan, but no timing details for these is currently available.

Medway

- The proposed Medway Core Strategy was formally withdrawn by the council in November 2013. A new Local Plan is now being prepared and consultation on issues and options is likely to be undertaken before the end of 2015. In the meantime the council has agreed an interim housing needs target of 1,000 dwellings per year as a basis for planning in Medway, pending the completion of a comprehensive assessment of housing and economic needs. This is an increase from 815 dwellings per year as included in the abandoned Core Strategy.

Kent County Council

- The Minerals and Waste Local Plan, setting out overall strategy, was submitted for examination in November 2014. The examination hearings were held during April 2015 and as a result the county council published proposed modifications to the Plan in August and invited comments on them by 12th October. These modifications will be considered by the inspector before his report is submitted to the council.
- The preparation of Mineral and Waste Sites Plans will re-commence after the Local Plan is adopted, most probably during 2016.



The Creek, winter- Vicky Ellis



The Creek, winter- Vicky Ellis

Social Scene



Borde Hill Gardens

Our volunteer outings organiser Margaret Micklewright has a busy social calendar planned for the next year.

Wednesday 13 January: Festive lunch – a repeat visit to The George at Molash after we all enjoyed our lunch there so much this year - cost approx. £20, menus to be sent in November.

Tuesday 8 March: Tour of the newly opened Scotland Yard Black Museum – cost approx. £44, see magazine insert for details.

Wednesday 20 April: Peacehaven Waste Water Treatment Plant – re-booked after our September outing had to be cancelled due to severe flooding at the plant. Followed by a visit to Borde Hill Gardens – cost £35.

Thursday 12 May: Tour of Denbies Wine Estate near Dorking and visit to Painshill Park Gardens - cost approx. £44.

Day trip on a Fred Olsen cruise liner at Dover: date/cost to be fixed early next year.

Peacehaven wastewater treatment works
photo Southern Water



KEEP THE DATE – don't forget that we will hold our **AGM on 20th November** at our usual venue of Lenham Village Hall. This will be an opportunity to hear about the work of the branch and to share lunch with like-minded members. Papers enclosed with this magazine.



George Inn, Molash

MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME OUTDOORS

10% DISCOUNT* FOR CPRE MEMBERS

Apologetic sunshine peaks through the clouds, shyly making up for the earlier shower. On those days when the British weather is as indecisive as ever, nothing beats being prepared and having the right kit. Come rain, shine, or a bit of both, we have a huge range of brand new autumn winter clothing and equipment to make you feel at home outdoors this season. To explore more, visit us in store or head to COTSWOLDOUTDOOR.COM and start your adventure.

**MAIDSTONE | TUNBRIDGE WELLS
CANTERBURY | ORPINGTON**

**STORES NATIONWIDE
COTSWOLDOUTDOOR.COM**

*Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. Only valid on production of valid identification in store or promotional code online. Offer expires 31.05.16

Fancy a tippie?

CPRE members are entitled to half price or two-for-one entry at many gardens, houses and attractions across England. In the latest in our series on Kent attractions, we take a look at Chapel Down Winery in Tenterden.

Chapel Down is England's leading wine producer and has been instrumental in changing perceptions of English wine. The winery is set amongst 22 acres of vineyards in the heart of the English countryside. It is Kent's iconic chalk soil, the same as that of Champagne – just 90 miles to the south, coupled with the cool climate that enables Chapel Down to produce world-class sparkling wines, as well as aromatic whites and elegant light reds from grapes such as Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Bacchus.

The Chapel Down winery boasts some of the best winemaking facilities in England and last year produced approximately one million bottles of still and sparkling wine. It has recently acquired land at Street Farm in Boxley on the North Downs and Scurms Farm in Sandhurst to grow more grapes to meet increasing demand. Chapel Down believes Kent has the finest overall conditions for grape growing in England. However, it also sources fruit from a wider area - from Essex to Hampshire - to ensure consistency and reduce the risks of crop failure through frost, unusual weather events and climate.

The wines have won many international awards and gained support from leading chefs such as Gordon Ramsay and Jamie Oliver, as well as great institutions such as The Royal Opera House, Festival Hall and The RAC Club.

The Chapel Down winery welcomes over 50,000 visitors each year and offers guided tours, tutored tastings and gift experiences, and has won a TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence three years running. There is also a restaurant, The Swan, and a shop stocking local produce.

Open year-round, including vineyard walks. Guided tours are available May-October, booking is essential.



Photos - Chapel Down Winery

Around *the districts*

A quick catch-up with our district committees - don't forget if you would like to become more involved with CPRE Kent in your local area please contact us in the office and we will put you in touch with your district chairman.

Elham Valley, Avidly Abide

Ashford

- Warehorne Solar Farm was required to have an environmental assessment and no further information has come forward to date.
- The large AXA site at Sevington, next to the M20 J10a has been sold to Aviva. English Heritage is strongly opposed to the present plans. No further development until the plans for J10a are decided - going out to consultation any time now.
- Chilmington Green: plans given permission, development needs to be started before the Local Plan Inquiry begins. Ashford has been accused of not having a five year supply of housing land. The planners refute this, but until the argument is settled all applicants are demanding their plans are allowed.
- Kingsnorth residents were dismayed in August when Jarvis Homes put forward plans for 750 houses in the weekly plans. A day later the plans were taken off the list and declared invalid. We wait to see if they reappear and see it as an attempt by Jarvis Homes to undermine the Local Plan.

Canterbury

- Canterbury Committee was heavily engaged in attending the Local Plan Examination. The first session ended in some disarray on 29th July, as the city council had been unable to deal with very pertinent matters brought up by the inspector. Throughout the plan preparation period the council withheld documents and failed to consult properly. Meanwhile, developers are jumping the gun in making premature planning applications before the inspector's report. We also have no reliable information about the Transport and Infrastructure Strategies. It seems to us that affordable housing, brownfield development, quality housing design and improved air quality are certainly not high on anyone's agenda.

Dartford & Gravesham

- We are working with Bean Residents Association and Southfleet Parish Council on the Garden City and Paramount Entertainment Resort proposals – the application is due this month (October) and, as a major infrastructure project, will be decided on in one year. We support the project if the transport plan is right. Getting Crossrail extended to Gravesend is the key.
- Local residents managed to get a planning application refused on what initially looked like someone adapting their home in the Green Belt. However, when the planning history was taken into account (24 previous planning applications and permitted development rights) it became clear there was a danger of uncontrolled development.
- More contact with Kent County Council trying to get improvements to the A227/ A2 inter-change – we need to make walking and cycling safer to reduce car journeys and air pollution.



Crossrail train, photo Department of Transport

Dover

- Dover District Committee holds its AGM on Saturday 31st October at 2pm at The Guildhall in Sandwich.

Maidstone

- Maidstone Borough Council has dug its heels in and refused to reduce its housing target from 18,560 dwellings by 2031. This is an increase of 29% over the actual numbers in 2011. The reason given is the need to complete the Local Plan quickly to avoid government involvement. It has consequently approved a considerable number of planning applications because the borough does not have a five year supply of available sites.
- Even though the appeal against planning applications at junction 8 of the M20 was won, we now hear that the applicants have a new, reduced scheme so we might have to go through this all again. Another employment application has been put forward at Woodcut Farm, within the area of the Kent International Gateway application between the M20 and A20, which we strongly oppose. Maidstone Borough Council is refusing to look at junction 5, just outside the borough boundary but adjacent to the town, in spite of the National Planning Policy Framework requirement for it to cooperate with the neighbouring authority.
- We await two appeal decisions: one for 220 houses at Headcorn, and another for 500 houses adjacent to the Maidstone Hospital.

Medway

- Medway Council approved the proposals to build 5,000 houses on the disused MoD site at Lodge Hill in 2013. However, it has emerged that this is one of the most significant breeding sites for nightingales in the UK and Natural England has designated it a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The planning decision has been called-in by the Secretary of State and the inquiry will begin in October. Meanwhile work is beginning on a new draft of Medway's local plan, the last version of which placed heavy reliance on this site to meet its housing targets. Although Land Securities, the developer behind the controversial housing plan, has pulled out of the project, the public inquiry will still take place.



Sevenoaks

- The decision last autumn to allow housing as part of the redevelopment of Fort Halstead has been followed up quickly by an outline planning application for 450 units. We have objected, as have neighbouring parish councils in strongest terms. Traffic effects in particular would seriously damage the AONB - what price tranquillity! - and would pour yet more pollution into the designated Air Quality Management Area caused by the M25.
- We gave no cheers at all when the Airports Commission came down in favour of a new runway at Heathrow. CPRE Kent believes that new airport capacity in the south-east is unnecessary and environmentally damaging. The Commission has not ruled out a new runway at Gatwick, which it considers 'feasible'. Southern parts of Sevenoaks District are already badly affected by the new narrower flightpath into Gatwick, doubling that with a new runway would be intolerable.
- Sevenoaks District Council withdrew its proposal for a huge gypsy and traveller site on Green Belt land which it owns in the AONB at Shoreham. It has now put its holding there up for sale. The future may be uncertain but at least the landscape of the Darent Valley has been spared.

Shepway

- Considerable local interest has culminated in the formation of the Elham Valley Action Group regarding a gypsy site at the former Palm Tree pub. A public meeting was held with Shepway District Council where residents requested the Certificate of Lawfulness (granted in 2007) be revoked under Section 193 of the Town and Country Act 1990.
- Application for four wind turbines at Lower Agnet: this was turned down after a meeting with Shepway District Council which committee members attended, with a persuasive speech from Beatrice Paine. At the same meeting plans for six new houses and a Martello Tower residence in a wood above Sandgate were approved to our amazement as a smaller application was rejected two years previously.
- Outstanding applications include six wind turbines at Harringe Lane, Sellindge and a 45MW Biomass plant at Lympe Industrial Park.



Swale

- Two appeals are now in progress by Gladman homes. One is for 330 dwellings on greenfield land, currently orchards that would almost completely fill the gap between Newington and Hartlip Hill. The other is for 580 homes on greenfield land on the southern edge of Sittingbourne. Both appeals are for non-determination and feature areas not included in Swale's draft plan.

Thanet

- Thanet District Council received an unprecedented number of objections to its draft Local Plan when it opened its consultation at the beginning of 2015. Local concerns focused principally on the high housing targets which, if accepted, would see huge areas of land on the edges of villages such as Birchington and Westgate swallowed under housing. Most, if not all, of this land is of the highest agricultural quality and we believe that it should be safeguarded for the future.



Demonstration walk by Garlinge, Westgate and Birchington residents. along ST1, Westgate



Tonbridge & Malling

- At the AGM in May Harry Rayner stepped down as District Chairman after five years – his comprehensive knowledge of the planning system will be much missed. Cally Ware was elected as Chairman, with Andrew Wells as Deputy Chairman and Pete Gillin as Honorary Secretary. The other committee members are Mike Taylor, Stuart Olson, Pat Crawford, Bill Ware and Harry Rayner.
- The Tonbridge and Malling call for sites is now complete and 212 sites have been suggested, predominately for housing development. We await the Issues and Options Report next year to consider the borough council's findings on the merits of each site and will then comment in detail on the sites, including a proposed 3000 new houses in Borough Green, Wrotham and Platt.
- The committee decided not to object to an application for a 25 acre solar farm near Wrotham on Green Belt at the southern edge of the AONB. The land, between the M20 and M26, is not overlooked, is mostly of poor agricultural quality (3b) and has been impacted by the adjacent motorway construction spoil. A few houses might have a view but visual impact will be minimised. All recommendations following an ecological survey were adopted and existing hedgerows and mature trees will be retained. The committee was mindful that green energy with no carbon emissions in the right location is very beneficial to the environment. However we have suggested a condition to ensure that the land is restored to agricultural use afterwards so that it doesn't become a brownfield site.

Tunbridge Wells

- Unfortunately, despite our opposition, planning permission has been granted for large solar farms on some "best and most versatile" agricultural land on two sites in the Green Belt near Five Oak Green.
- This autumn we shall be participating in the Examination in Public of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Site Allocations Development Plan, trying to defend the Green Belt around Tunbridge Wells from encroachment, questioning the sudden proposed doubling of the housing allocation for Paddock Wood and questioning the proposed large housing development in the Crane Valley in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at Cranbrook.



Photo by Hilary Newport

Environment Group

- Water Situation – signs of a general recovery from the long dry spells but groundwater levels in parts of the North Downs Chalk aquifer continue to fall steeply.
- Water Resource Management - Kent faces a continuing increase in the public supply deficit, with South East Water anticipating a 50 Ml/day shortfall by 2040. Water companies are working to improve efficiency and make long-term provision for new sources of supply, including inter-regional transfers.
- Food Security - the UK currently imports 60% of total food requirement and the Government has set a target of doubling national food production by 2040, a tall order for Kent given the prospect of further major losses of productive farmland.
- Shale Gas Development (Fracking) - Europa Oil has been granted planning permission for an exploratory borehole in the Mole Valley at Holmwood, south of Dorking. CPRE Kent made representation on behalf of Surrey Branch, about the risk to the groundwater quality of the Lower Greensand aquifer (a risk acknowledged by the applicants' consultants). We need to consider the implications of the new Government measures for fast-tracking (determination within 16 weeks) applications by oil/gas exploration companies. The provisions will apply to locations in the Weald and East Kent. CPRE has drafted a response opposing the measures as favouring the developers to the disadvantage of the environment and local communities.



Bough Beech Reservoir by Andrew McClintock



Gift Aid

Gift Aid is an efficient way to donate to charity - for every £1 an individual gives, the Government adds an extra 25p (or 40p for a higher rate tax payer). The charity must make a Gift Aid claim. There is no limit on the amount that can be given under Gift Aid but the individual must have paid sufficient tax to cover that recoverable by the charity. There are also rules to stop abuse of Gift Aid with limits on the benefits given to donors. For example receiving a quarterly

newsletter would be acceptable but a regular lunch would not.

Payroll Giving

Payroll Giving is where a monthly or weekly donated amount is deducted at source before tax, therefore giving the donor tax relief on the amount donated. The tax relief depends on the rate of tax paid.

So for every £1.00 received the donor will pay:

- 80p if a lower rated taxpayer
- 60p if a higher rated taxpayer
- 55p if an additional rated taxpayer.

Donations to charity

No tax is liable on any land, property or shares donated to charity (even when sold for less than market value) thus reducing inheritance tax if due on an estate. Likewise for donations of land, property or shares to a charity during the lifetime of an individual, the tax relief received would be on both income tax and capital gains tax. However, records must be kept of the donation to prove that the charity has accepted the gift.

Leaving gifts to charity in a will

Any legacy left to a charity will be either taken off the total value of the estate prior to inheritance tax calculation (which can bring an estate likely to be in the 40% tax bracket back under the threshold) and/or reduce the inheritance tax rate if more than 10% of the estate is left to charity. The donor can choose to donate any fixed amount, an item such as an antique or house or the residue of the estate after other gifts have been distributed.

Contact us for more information.



Vicky Ellis

News round-up



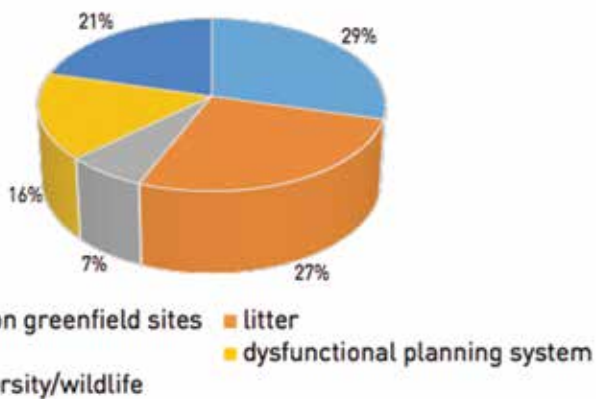
There is a lot that's happened since the last Kent Voice.

CPRE Kent went along to nine events this year, including point-to-point meetings, agricultural, equine and tractor festivals. The Kent County Show was a highlight - we made a profit for the first time and recruited many new members. We featured merchandise on our stand including wonderful umbrellas with pictures of cows, horses, chickens or pigs which proved so popular we had run out by 1pm on the first day! We have ordered more (see merchandise insert) and at just £15.00 they are a bargain. A massive thank you to all our stoic volunteers who help at these events: without you it would not happen.

Prize draw and survey

We had 370 entries in our Kent County Show prize draw to win a bird nesting box, food and feeder kindly donated by Dobbies of Ashford. The winning entry was Liz Stamp from Rainham. Visitors were asked to give their opinion on what they felt were the greatest threats to Kent's countryside. The graph shows the boxes ticked, not the number of people who entered. Clearly new housing on greenfield, Green Belt and AONB land is a huge concern, closely followed by littering and loss of wildlife and biodiversity.

Countryside concerns



Membership

CPRE Kent is only able to continue its valuable work fighting to protect our lovely Kent countryside because of its members and supporters. Without you we would quite simply not be here. So that CPRE Kent can continue to preserve our heritage and landscape for future generations we need to grow our membership. The more members CPRE Kent has the louder our voice becomes, so if every member went out and recruited just one new member this would double our strength. And with Christmas fast approaching why not consider a CPRE Kent gift membership as a present that would last all year and into the future. **Don't forget all members are entitled to half price or two-for-one entry into many historic houses, gardens and attractions across the county.** Please contact Vicky for details.

EVENTS 2016

Next year's dates for your diary

- **Agri Expo: March 2nd**
- **Kent County Show: July 8th, 9th & 10th**
- **Tractor Fest: August 20th & 21st**

If you would like to volunteer please contact Vicky Ellis on 01233 714540 (we will pay your expenses and entry fee).

Open 8:30 to 6
Monday to Friday
9 to 5 Sundays

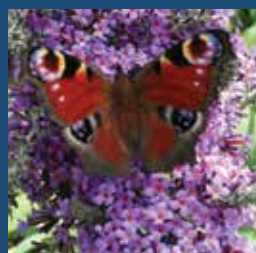
CHILHAM SHOP
FARM SHOP & PLANT CENTRE
CANTERBURY ROAD CHILHAM
&
CHILHAM POST OFFICE
Tel: 01227 730348
www.chilhamshop.com.uk

Logheat
www.logheat.co.uk
Tel: 01233 733373
Mob: 07966 709498



A gift in your will

Because we all care about causes that are important in our life many people like to leave a gift to charity in their will. Please consider protecting our wonderful countryside and remember CPRE Kent when making your will. Whitehead Monckton will donate £50 for each will or pair of wills if you mention CPRE Kent.



Help protect the future of Kent's countryside by helping us today

By remembering CPRE Kent when considering your will you can help ensure we will be here protecting the Kent countryside well into the future.

If you are thinking of writing a will or have already had a will written, please think about leaving a gift to CPRE Kent.

Whitehead Monckton Solicitors is delighted to support CPRE Kent by donating £50 for every will made by CPRE Kent supporters.

You can find out more about CPRE Kent and how you can support us by visiting www.cprekent.org.uk



To talk to someone about leaving a gift to CPRE Kent please contact Vicky Ellis 01233 714540 or email info@cprekent.org.uk

contact us



We always love to hear from our members, so please feel free to drop us a line and tell us what's happening in your part of the county. We are especially eager to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer as a district committee member. If you want to help us to keep Kent beautiful, then get in touch with us at info@cprekent.org.uk or call 01233 714540.

Office Contacts

Director

Dr Hilary Newport hilary.newport@cprekent.org.uk

Marketing & Office Manager

Vicky Ellis vicky.ellis@cprekent.org.uk

Planning team

Brian Lloyd brian.lloyd@cprekent.org.uk

Paul Buckley paul.buckley@cprekent.org.uk

Jillian Barr jillian.barr@cprekent.org.uk

Campaigns and PR Manager

Susannah Richter susannah.richter@cprekent.org.uk

400 CLUB



Here are the winners since the Autumn/Winter edition of Kent Voice:

Apr 15

Mrs D Haggerty	£40.00
Mrs A Moreton	£30.00
Mrs A Reader	£25.00
Mrs Owlett	£15.00
Mr & Mrs Wise	£15.00
Mr A Terry	£15.00

May 15

Mr K Dare	
Miss H Butcher	£40.00
Mr N Pearson	£30.00
Mr L Horscroft	£25.00
Ms H Hunt	£15.00
Mr C Daniel	£15.00
Miss J Lushington	£15.00

June 15

Mr A Terry	£100.00
Miss A Farley	£50.00
Mrs P Pollock	£25.00
Mrs M Palmer	£20.00
Mr & Mrs Williams	£20.00

Jul 15

Mr M Loveday	£40.00
Dr S Pittman	£30.00
Mrs D Haggerty	£25.00
Mr P Mattocks	£15.00
Mr C Hayman	£15.00
Miss J Lushington	£15.00

Aug 15

Mr L Horscroft	£40.00
Mrs P Pollock	£30.00
Miss A Taylor	£25.00
Mr M Loveday	£15.00
Miss B Myatt	£15.00
Ms J Fadden	£15.00

Sep 15

Mr P Stevens	£40.00
Lady E Akenhead	£25.00
Miss S Jacobs	£15.00
Mrs G Collins	£15.00
Mr M Wheeler	£15.00

Wild flower bonanza

CPRE Kent has teamed up with Grow Wild to brighten up the village of Charing with colourful wild flowers. We successfully bid for free seeds which we shared with the local surgery and primary school. They have been busy preparing their grounds to sow the seeds early next year. Grow Wild is an initiative of Kew Gardens, funded by the National Lottery, and aims to encourage Britain to grow more wild flowers to help pollinators, especially in urban areas. The Grow Wild team hope to create over one million square metres of wild flowers each year, helping to transform local spaces and inspire us to get back in touch with nature.

For your chance to get your green fingers on free wild flower seeds, visit www.growwilduk.com. Or contact Vicky Ellis for CPRE Kent's own wild flower seeds, sponsored by the NFU, available for a small donation.



MHA MacIntyre Hudson

GLOBAL EXPERTISE • NATIONAL EXPERIENCE • LOCAL EXCELLENCE®

Chartered Accountants, Tax and Business Advisers

Our priority is to protect your interests, individually as well as in business.

We make sure you get the best out of the world you create. Our approach is always personal and in a changing world, our support is a constant – and enables our clients to achieve their goals.

For more information contact **Richard Kreffer** on 01227 464 991 or email Richard.Kreffer@mhllp.co.uk

www.macintyreHUDSON.co.uk



MHA MacIntyre Hudson is the trading name of MacIntyre Hudson LLP, a limited liability partnership, registered in England with registered number OC312313. A list of partners' names is open for inspection at its registered office, 201 Silbury Boulevard, Milton Keynes MK9 1LZ. Registered to carry on audit work in the United Kingdom and regulated for a range of investment business activities by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. An independent member of MHA, a national association of UK accountancy firms. The term 'partner' or 'partners' indicates that the person (or persons) in question is (or are) a member(s) of MacIntyre Hudson LLP or an employee or consultant of its affiliated businesses with equivalent standing and qualifications. Partners and directors acting as administrators or administrative receivers contract as agents and without personal liability. Further information and links to the respective regulators and appointed individuals' qualifications can be found via our website www.macintyreHUDSON.co.uk/information.html

MHA MacIntyre Hudson is an independent member of Baker Tilly International. Baker Tilly International Limited is an English company. Baker Tilly International provides no professional services to clients. Each member firm is a separate and independent legal entity and each describes itself as such. Baker Tilly UK Group LLP is the owner of the Baker Tilly trademark. MHA MacIntyre Hudson is not Baker Tilly International's agent and does not have the authority to bind Baker Tilly International or act on Baker Tilly International's behalf. None of Baker Tilly International, MHA MacIntyre Hudson, nor any of the other member firms of Baker Tilly International has any liability for each other's acts or omissions.

